



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Temecula, California	Accident Number:	LAX01LA205
Date & Time:	May 27, 2001, 12:55 Local	Registration:	N337GD
Aircraft:	Cessna 337G	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

While en route, following a roadway through a mountain valley and operating under visual flight rules in conditions of low ceiling and poor visibility, the airplane impacted marked power transmission wires approximately 120 feet above ground level. The airplane's windshield was broken out, the cabin ceiling and doorposts were deformed, and a wing strut was damaged. The pilot continued the flight to his intended destination, which was the nearest airport. Weather at the nearest reporting point, 14 miles distant and approximately 1,500 feet lower elevation, reported scattered clouds at 1,000 feet agl and overcast ceiling at 1,500 feet agl.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's intentional flight into adverse weather while operating under visual flight rules, his failure to maintain a cruising altitude sufficient to remain clear of power transmission wires, and his failure to maintain a visual lookout sufficient to see and avoid the power transmission wires.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION(MARKED)

2. (C) FLIGHT INTO ADVERSE WEATHER - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On May 27, 2001, at 1255 hours Pacific daylight time, a Cessna 337G, N337GD, sustained substantial damage when it impacted and severed an electrical power transmission wire about 5 miles south of Temecula, California. The owner/pilot was operating the airplane under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91. The private pilot and one passenger were not injured. The personal cross-country flight departed Brown Field, San Diego, California, about 1235, and was destined for the French Valley Airport, Temecula. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan had been filed.

According to a Federal Aviation Administration inspector, the airplane impacted power transmission wires approximately 120 feet above ground level, approximately 2 miles east of Interstate highway 15. The wires cross the highway about 9 miles south of the French Valley airport. The top (skyline) wire was marked; however, the wire the aircraft severed was lower. A person who was present in the area at the time told the inspector that conditions of low clouds and poor visibility prevailed. Inspection of the airplane revealed the windshield was broken out, the cabin ceiling and a doorpost were bent, and a wing strut was damaged. The inspector located a GPS antenna skin doubler on the ground near the severed wire. He was able to match the piece to damage on the aircraft.

A Sempra Energy Company employee told the Safety Board investigator that the power interruption occurred at 1255.

In his statement to the Safety Board, the pilot reported he was en route from Brown Field to French Valley "in VFR [visual flight rules] conditions." When approximately 10 miles south of French Valley and with the airport in sight, there was a loud bang, after which the windshield was broken and the cabin ceiling was broken open. The pilot continued the flight to his intended destination at French Valley.

The nearest weather reporting point was at MCAS Camp Pendleton (KNFG), 14 miles south-southwest, and approximately 1,500 feet lower elevation. At 1255, their reported weather was scattered clouds at 1,000 feet agl and overcast ceiling at 1,500 feet agl.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	66, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 14, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	March 14, 2001
Flight Time:	1907 hours (Total, all aircraft), 778 hours (Total, this make and model), 1907 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 53 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 26 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N337GD
Model/Series:	337G	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	33701921
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 2, 2000 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4700 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	101 Hrs	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1166 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-360
Registered Owner:	Donald J. Vierstra	Rated Power:	210 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KNFG,77 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	14 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	210°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 1000 ft AGL	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 1500 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	230°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.89 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C / 14°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	SAN DIEGO, CA (SDM)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	MURRIETA/TEMECU, CA (F70)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:35 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Parker, Richard
Additional Participating Persons:	John Blanco; FAA Flt Stnds Dist Office; San Diego, CA
Original Publish Date:	February 5, 2002
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=52456

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).